THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE): (a) to (c) The Special Bearer Bonds, 1991 matured for redemption from 2nd February, 1991. Since then, it has been reported that 37 fake bearer bonds valued at Rs. 4.44 Lakhs have been presented for encashment at the following receiving offices:—

Receiving Office	No. of fake bonds received	Value (Rs. in lakhs)
Reserve Bank of India, Bombay . . .	15	1.80
Reserve Bank of India, New Delhi . . .	19	2.28
State Bank of India Goregaon Branch . .	3	0.36
TOTAL	37	4.44

(d) The cases have been reported to the local police authorities for investigation.

Income Tax Exemption on Sale of Handicrafts

1807. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts has urged the Central Government to restore the tax exemption benefits on profits from sale of handicrafts of foreign tourists under Section 80 HHC of the Income Tax Act;

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government in this regard;

(c) whether in order to promote the export of handicrafts, Government has any other proposal to provide exemption; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Exemption from tax granted to export profits is intended to encourage taxpayers to export rather than sall in the protected domestic market. This consideration is absent in the case of persons selling goods at shops and emporia within India. Therefore, the 100 per cent exemption allowed to exporters under section 80HHC cannot be allowed to sales to foreign tourists over the counter.

(c) and (d) There is no other proposal under tht Income-tax Act. Persons who export handicrafts outside India are already allowed exemption of the entire profits earned from the export business in terms of section 80HHC of the I.T. Act.

Interest Rates on Bank Loans

1808. SHRI KHYOMO LOTHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) What are the different rates of interest charged by the Nationalised Banks on various loans, such as on Housing industries, agriculture, etc;

(b) whether Government are contemplating any concession on interest on soft loans for entreprenures and farmers living in rural areas, particularly in the far flung regions like North East for construction of houses, starting industries, agricultural farms etc; and